

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 00333

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, SP, GI
SUBJECT: SPAIN TAKES SMALL STEP ON GIBRALTAR; GOS OFFICIAL
DISCUSSES PROSPECTS

1. AS A "SIGN OF GOOD WILL , SPAIN HAS NOT CLOSED DOWN THE
TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS OPENED WITH GIBRALTAR JUST BEFORE
CHRISTMAS, AND HAS NOT SET A DATE FOR THEIR CLOSING,
EMBASSY OFFICER WAS TOLD JANUARY 11 BY THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY'S CHIEF FOR WESTERN EUROPE (DEL PINO). (IN THE
LAST TWO YEARS, PHONE LINES WERE OPENED ONLY FOR THE
CHRISTMAS SEASON.) THE GOS UNDERSTANDS, DEL PINO SAID,
THAT HMG FACED A POSSIBLE DIFFICULTY IN AGREEING TO
DISCUSS THE GIBRALTAR ISSUE AS LONG AS IT COULD BE CHARGED
WITH DOING SO IN THE FACE OF SPANISH "RESTRICTIONS". AT
THIS POINT, DEL PINO CONTINUED, IT WOULD BE WELL FOR HMG
TO RECIPROCATATE IN SOME WAY, AND IT COULD ALSO BE HELPFUL
IF "OTHER COUNRIES INTERESTED IN A SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEM" (READ THE US) COULD SOMEHOW "PAVE THE WAY".

2. IN THE SPANISH VIEW, DEL PINO STATED EMPHATICALLY, THE
SAME TREATY WHICH PROVIDED FOR BRITISH CONTROL OF
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GIBRALTAR ALSO MAINTAINED THERE WOULD BE NO COMMUNICATIONS
BETWEEN THE ROCK AND THE MAINLAND, SO IN FACT THE "S0-
CALLED RESTRICTIONS" (AS HE REFERRED TO THEM) ARE AS
JUSTIFIED AS THE BRITISH PRESENCE. THE GOS IS NEVERTHELESS
NOT HAPPY IMPOSING THE RESTRICTIONS, HE SAID, AND IS
PREPARED TO EASE THEM PROGRESSIVELY AS LONG AS THERE IS
PARALLEL PROGRESS ON THE BRITISH SIDE. THAT IS, SPAIN

WILL NOT SIMPLY "GIVE IN"--I.E., LIFT THE RESTRICTIONS--
IN THE ABSENCE OF PROGRESS IN THE GIBRALTAR TALKS.

3. NO DATE HAS YET BEEN SET FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF THE
TALKS, SAID DEL PINO, BUT IT WAS AGREED IN STRASBOURG
THAT THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER ROUND, AND THE GOS LOOKED
FORWARD TO AN EARLY RENEWAL. THE FIRST ROUND HAD GONE
WELL IN THAT EVERYONE HAD SAID WHAT THEY HAD TO SAY.
NEXT TIME, DEL PINO THOUGHT, THEY CAN GO ON TO SAY SOME-
THING ELSE.

4. FOR ITS PART, ACCORDING TO DEL PINO, SPAIN WAS
PREPARED TO ACCOMMODATE THE BRITISH AND THE GIBRALTARIANS
TO THE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE EXTENT. ENVISAGED BY THE GOS
WAS A KIND OF EMPHASIZED AUTONOMY FOR
GIBRALTAR, IN WHICH IT WOULD HAVE ITS OWN ADMINISTRATION,
ITS OWN COURTS, AND EVEN ITS OWN PUBLIC ORDER FORCES.
THE GOS HAD NOT PUT FORWARD THESE IDEAS, DEL PINO SAID,
BECAUSE IT WANTED TO GIVE THE GIBRALTARIAN ATTITUDE TIME
TO EVOLVE, AND BECAUSE ITS NEW CONSTITUTION (WHICH WOULD
ALLOW FOR AUTONOMY WITHIN SPAIN) HAS NOT YET BEEN
APPROVED. DEL PINO EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT SOME EXTRA
MEASURE OF AUTONOMY FOR GIBRALTAR WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY
SPAIN'S VARIOUS REGIONS BECAUSE OF ITS SUI GENERIS NATURE;
SPAIN WOULD OF COURSE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH MATTERS
AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EXTERNAL DEFENSE.
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5. BREAKING DOWN THE GIBRALTAR ISSUE INTO WHAT HE SEES
AS ITS THREE DIMENSIONS--TERRITORY, POPULATION, AND
MILITARY BASE--DEL PINO SAID THE GOS WAS ALSO EXTREMELY
FLEXIBLE ON THE THIRD DIMENSION, AND WAS PREPARED TO
CONSIDER ANY NUMBER OF POSSIBLE FORMULAS FOR PROVIDING
GUARANTEES REGARDING THE BASE, INCLUDING THE PARTICIPA-
TION OF THIRD COUNTRIES OR PARTIES (I.E. NATO). AT
ANOTHER POINT, HOWEVER, HE REFERRED TO THE POSSIBLE
CRITICISM THE GOS MIGHT SUFFER DOMESTICALLY IF ITS
RECOVERY OF GIBRALTAR LEFT A MILITARY INSTALLATION THERE
OVER WHICH IT HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OR SAY WHATSOEVER.

6. THE BRITISH DCM, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED OUR DCM
THAT THE PHONE LINE WAS STILL OPEN, TOLD HIM THEY
CONSIDERED IT A "SIGNIFICANT LITTLE GESTURE", BUT THAT
THEY DID NOT EXPECT NEGOTIATIONS ON A SETTLEMENT TO MOVE
RAPIDLY. STABLER

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